



State Rehabilitation Council
to the
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services



Minutes
March 21, 2012
Goodwill Industries
Bridgeport, CT

Attendance

Present

SRC Members: Sharon Denson, Jan Hasenjager, Roberta Hurley, Mary Pierson Keating, James Quick, Larry Robinson, John F. Sims & Victor Xavier

BRS Staff: Kathy Blewett & Evelyn Oliver Knight

Volunteers: Linda Mizzi & Jerry Moran

Excused

SRC Members: Michele Fontaine & Janette Williams

Ex-officio: Amy Porter

Volunteers: Jennifer Held, Ellen Econs & Warren Stamp

Absent

SRC Members: Tanisha Minnis & George Narvaez

****Volunteers** – Persons interested in the SRC, but not appointed as Members are considered Volunteers. Volunteers may attend meetings and work on committees, but may not vote on any action. When new members are sought for the SRC, Volunteers can be considered for membership.*

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The meeting was called to order about 1:20 PM. Introductions included new faces: Linda Mizzi (CAP representative), Jerry Moran (pending Governor's appointment) & Larry Robinson (Disability Resource Center, new member).

SRC Update: Evelyn Oliver Knight

Evelyn gave us the details of the public meeting and the invitations sent to 5,000+ consumers. The invitation invites consumers to look at the draft of the State Plan on line and share comments/suggestions at the public meetings. District Directors will be there with their supervisors to talk to consumers if they have any issues that need more personal attention.

Evelyn talked about the State Plan and the SRC's responsibility to comment on it. Evelyn had previously sent a notice and asked us to think about what we want to put in our section of the plan. Evelyn needs our input by Friday, March 23, 2012. We will not have input from the public meetings in our section prior to the draft being published. Everything we have done all year should be in the draft plan. We may add comments after the public meetings, if needed, prior to submitting the final copy of the state plan.

Evelyn also talked about the new Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitative Services and there is a website that shares some information, but the consolidation is still a work in progress.

SRC Chairperson Report: Mary Pierson Keating, Esq.

Mary is going to Bethesda in April to meet with congressional representatives, CSAVR members and NCSRC members. For the first time, SRC members will have a two-day session prior to the CSAVR meeting. A Leadership Training is scheduled for Friday; the NCSRC will conduct a special training on Saturday. A trivial pursuit game based on the Institute of Rehabilitation Issues (IRI) book on SRCs is also scheduled. Attendance at this conference is important to help SRCs understand their role and how we relate to others in the VR process.

Treasurer Report

In Michele's absence, Evelyn shared the Treasurer's Report. Travel reimbursements from the January meeting were the only change in the budget.

BRS Update: Kathy Blewett for Amy Porter

Amy apologized for not making it today. She is focusing on consolidation issues. Trying to put together a business unit so hiring will be a little down road. BRS has hired all empty positions except a secretary for Ansonia new office. Twelve new counselors are in training and no other positions opening except Enfield office. Amy is out meeting with constituency groups of the new agency to hear what their concerns are. Amy wants SRC to be aware that they have been meeting about Order Of Selection (OOS). BRS will propose opening the OOS effective October 1, 2012 because we have the resources of money and staff available to increase service. For the past 20+ years, BRS had be limiting services to consumers who had most significant and significant disabilities (Priority #1 and Priority #2 consumers). Priority #3 consumers will be able to apply for assistance when the OOS is expanded. Consumers with disabilities who had not met Priority #1 and Priority #2 eligibility categories will be eligible for services. BRS will closely monitor the usage and anticipates that due to capacity, we will have to go back to limiting the OOS at some point in the future.

Consumer Satisfaction Committee- Jim Quick

Survey which was an in-person survey in fourteen of the BRS offices. The committee has compiled all the information. Jan is going to add Norwich to the survey results and will get the recommendations to Evelyn for the State Plan. Amy will respond to each recommendation from the survey and other areas of concern that may be identified in Attachment 4.2c.

Some of the committee recommendations as a result of the survey:

- Signage
- Who is greeting the people coming in?

Jerry talked about customer service and how they approach this at Mohegan Sun.

Conversation about continuity in each BRS office and Kathy explained the history of why they did orientations and why some offices still do that. Discussion about consumers being surveyed through BRS and Kathy talked about the Statewide Needs Assessment and that UCONN will be doing surveys.

Business Partnership Committee – Roberta Hurley

Discussion about what we have done about vendors and emergency services for people that need equipment repairs. Roberta, Sharon, Mary and Michelle will continue to work on this.

Intercouncil Nomination – John Sims

Evelyn made an announcement of members who have been reappointed and new members that are on the SRC. Some appointments are still pending. Evelyn talked about people that are supposed to be on SRC but having difficulty getting people here due to either a vacancy in their position or not having staff that can attend.

Legislation Policy and Planning

Mary asked if the SRC posters were made to be put in the offices. Posters will discuss consumer rights and responsibilities and recruit new members. In George's absence, Evelyn sent out a sample poster but did not get feedback. Kathy mentioned that the SRC is in the Consumer Handbook and invites new members there.

Went over last year's recommendations for the State Plan and Mary asked if there were any other recommendations.

Other:

Discussion about consumer input in decisions being made at the state level.

Mary asked Sharon to share her thoughts about training counselors. Sharon stated that counselors need to be trained to have higher expectations for people. Kathy stated that better customer service all around would address this. Evelyn mentioned the extensive training that counselors receive. Sharon suggested disability awareness training.

Mary asked Kathy if BRS will have more public meetings. There will not be any changes to the current schedule of public meetings as the agency is going through so many changes right now.

Roberta announced new CRP meetings that are happening across the state and how good it is that all the CRP's are coming together.

John discussed Advocacy Unlimited and the Recovery Specialists positions throughout the state. You can go on Advocacy Unlimited website for details.

CTBLN Career Fair, May 4th, 2012

10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Manchester Community College

Manchester, CT

Registration forms are going out

Meeting adjourned about 3:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: *Roberta Hurley*